

# products

## LIFESPAN OF ASPHALT SHINGLES

What Roofers DON'T WANT You To Know

[Please see Definitions](#)

### LIFESPAN OF CONVENTIONAL FIBERGLASS SHINGLES

It's important to understand that all roofs wear unevenly and the determination of "failed" (or "failing") roofing is ALWAYS based on the worst, or weakest, portions of the roofing - never the strongest. It simply does not matter if the north-side of the roof is in relatively good condition when shingles on the south-side have already failed.

Prospective buyers will expect the (worst areas of) roofing to be able to pass a "**Five Year Certification**" inspection. When roofs "fail" this Re-Sale Inspection, normally the replacement of roofing or payment of a "Roofing Allowance" will be required in order to sell the home. Therefore, determination of the "Re-Sale Window" for roofing products is related to the condition of the worst area of roofing - even when the worst sections are only a small percentage of the entire roofing area.

Paying \$10,000 to re-roof with asphalt shingles today may just be your initial down payment

When it requires replacement costs of \$20,000 (with inflation) to Re-Sell the home in only 15 years.

It may be very little consolation to receive a warranty claim of \$2,400 (12%) from your asphalt manufacturer.

This is the problem of intentionally marketing roofing products with "Inflated" warranty periods. When manufacturers provide warranties of 30 years, 40 years and 50 years to "sell" asphalt shingles with a history of premature failures... many innocent families will suffer financial loss.

Asphalt manufacturers can simply add the cost of **projected** claim payments to the initial product pricing to offset all the claims associated with **expected** premature failures. This strategy allows use of "inflated" warranty periods (to increase market share) while still maintaining their desired profit margins.

Consumers should **Not be Shocked** by the idea that asphalt manufacturers (and asphalt roofers) are currently selling roofing shingles with a history of premature failures - Selling shingles they already know will be defective. The truth is, asphalt manufacturers and asphalt roofers have been selling defective shingles for a very long time. The sales of defective asphalt shingles has been widespread and pervasive - over a period of almost 30 years.

And consumers **Should Never Expect** asphalt manufacturers, or asphalt roofers, to disclose information on the history of premature failure (or the claims history) for shingles they are currently selling - they could not sell defective shingles for 30 years by disclosing the actual history of premature failures or documented history of claim payments.

There is always an adversarial relationship between consumers and sellers (manufacturers and roofers) because their financial interests are diametrically opposed. Do not EVER expect sellers of roofing to provide full disclosure on the history of premature failures - or the documented claim payments **for shingles they are currently selling**.

### Asphalt Durability: 5 to 10 years

Asphalt shingle manufacturers are notorious for not honoring their warranties, they always have an excuse, and people do not file suit due to high legal costs... Our area, near Chicago... We are tearing off more and more of the so-called "40 year" asphalt shingles that are **from 8 to 11 years old**. If the homeowner is concerned with how the roof looks (and not just being weather tight) they are **usually unhappy at the 6 to 10 year point**. [1]

### Asphalt Durability: 10 to 15 years

Most homeowners are lulled into thinking that, if a 30-year roof shingle is installed on their home

(as stated by the roof manufacturer), then that roof will last the suggested life expectancy.  
**Not so! Most roofs fail in 10 to 15 years. Very few roofs last past 15 years!** [2]

We have found that most of our asphalt shingle re-roofing in the Seattle area is replacement of fiberglass shingles that are only 10 years to 15 years old and that **very few fiberglass shingles have lasted past 15 years.** Shingles reaching that age tend to look pretty nasty and often could not pass a Re-Sale Inspection. [3]

Today's asphalt shingles are not the asphalt shingles of 30 years ago. Today, asphalt shingles are only 10 to 30 percent asphalt by weight - and less asphalt means poorer performance... Today's asphalt shingles are so susceptible to damage from heat, cold, thermo-shock, algae and mold that **asphalt roofs today most often last only 10 - 15 years.** By that time a good deal of the shingle has washed into the rain gutters. [4]

Most of us have been programmed into thinking that asphalt roofing is the only real option since its inexpensive and get the job done, at least in the short term. You get what you pay for... The problem is Asphalt doesn't hold up to the requirements that most homeowner have...  
**Asphalt usually protects your home for about 10 - 15 years...** [5]

In Florida, an asphalt roof will last approximately 10 to 15 years, so use that as a guideline. If you plan on another asphalt shingle roof, **you should expect to replace it again in 10 to 15 years.** [6]

## **Asphalt Durability: 15 to 20 years**

Asphalt roof coverings have a typical statistical **life expectancy from fifteen to twenty years.** Beware of those saying that life expectancy of asphalt roofs are longer than 25 years. You would be hard pressed to locate a roof still in useful condition that is more than twenty years old. [7]

In fact, its layered construction allowed manufacturers to use a much thinner layer of asphalt, which resulted in a baseline 30-year laminated shingle that had a realistic life expectancy that was less than the 20-year and 25-year organic shingles they were designed to replace.  
**Realistic life expectancy... 15 - 20 years.** [8]

According to the asphalt roofing industry, **the average shingle roof lasts 17 - 19 years.** The actual lifetime is dramatically lower than this in hot climates and extreme weather situations. Unfortunately, the warranties on these products do not cover natural wear and tear from weather. Damage resulting from high winds, hail, rain and extreme temperatures are also not covered. [9]

You can expect a metal roof to last at least 2 to 3 times longer than a regular roof. In general terms, count on a metal roof lasting 40 to 60 years and beyond. To put it in context, **the average life span of an asphalt roof is 12 to 20 years.** That lifespan can be shorter depending on the pitch of your roof and the climate in your area... asphalt begins to deteriorate as soon as you expose it to normal weather. [10]

When buyers are considering a home, they're always concerned about the condition of the roof... With metal, they know they won't need to do anything to it for at least 50 years. **With an asphalt roof they'll need to replace it within 15 to 20 years.** [11]

Asphalt can require re-roofing every 12 to 20 years, **with the average age of roofing in the U.S. being only 17 years.** That's because asphalt roofing, being made of oil impregnated paper or fiberglass begins to deteriorate as soon as you put it on your roof. [12]

## **Asphalt Durability Beyond 20 years?**

A recent study for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) determined the average life expectancy for asphalt shingles **is only 20 years.** [13] Even the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association (ARMA), recommends replacement of asphalt shingles **every 20 years.** [14]

However, estimates from both the National Association of Home Builders (20 years) and the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association (20 years) are **NOT indicating the Re-Sale Window** for asphalt shingles - which includes a **Five Year Certification.** If asphalt shingles have a 20 year "functional lifespan," that DOES NOT mean they can actually pass a **Re-Sale Inspection** at that time, please see: [What Constitutes a Roof Failure?](#)

Homeowners can be excused for considering an idea as ridiculous as 30, 40 or 50 year asphalt shingles... they are unsuspecting consumers, not roofing experts. But what about the roofing contractors? What about manufacturers? Can they ever be excused for using deception to sell defective products? See: [Selling Defective Shingles in Seattle](#)

It's very easy to "sell" inexperienced and unsuspecting buyers the idea of a long-term lifespan for asphalt shingles, when the only examples shown are less than 10 years old. It's something altogether different when consumers have the opportunity to actually see the condition of a 20 year fiberglass installation. See: [Recent Class Action Lawsuits](#)

Fiberglass shingles have been on the market for over 30 years. Even "luxury" shingles like the Presidential Shake have been produced for over 23 years. If a manufacturer or roofing contractor is unwilling (or unable) to let you see what you can expect your roof to look like in 15 or 20 years... maybe you should look for a different roofing material. Learn what roofers (and manufacturers) DON'T WANT you to know. Also see: [The Truth on Presidential Shingles](#)

## A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

On the issue of failed / failing roofing, it's important to understand that "expert" opinions will reflect the fundamental perspective of those expressing the opinion. And often the difference between the perspective of (roofing) **Sellers** and the perspective of (roof) **Buyers** can be quite extreme. The perspective of sellers and buyers differs because their financial interests are diametrically opposed.

All roofers claim to have the best product  
and all roofers claim to provide the best installation.  
**Obviously, that cannot be True.**

There is always an adversarial relationship between buyers and sellers  
roofing buyers should never expect full disclosure or unbiased information  
from asphalt manufacturers, asphalt distributors/suppliers or asphalt roofers.

Sellers (like CertainTeed) may consider roofing "failed" when shingles pass their functional lifespan and threaten damage from leaking. Buyers (homeowners) may consider "failure" to occur whenever the shingles are past their Re-Sale Window and require either replacement or payment of a "Roofing Allowance" in order to sell their home.\*

Sellers (like CertainTeed) may consider a certain percentage of premature failures to be acceptable because the cost of paying claims is already built into the shingle price - and very few failures get submitted as warranty claims. However, most buyers (homeowners) will consider ANY premature failure to be unacceptable - especially when the warranty payment is just a small percentage of actual replacement costs... and failure was **expected** by the Seller.

\* Based on product design and proven performance, **there are only two (2)** conventional fiberglass shingles that we find **ANY** evidence of typical durability beyond 20 years. These shingles are not popular products (in the Seattle area) as most roofers don't tell consumers about the history of premature failures - and the very limited durability of fiberglass shingles.

Do you want to get the **BEST VALUE** on your roofing project?  
You will need Full Disclosure and Unbiased Information.  
Contact us for Specific Advice on your Project.  
**Free Consultation Anywhere in U.S.**

[Seattle RoofBroker](#)

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- [1] 'Roofing - CertainTeed Shingles', en.allexperts.com
  - [2] 'What's in a Roof Shingle Warranty', inspectionconcepts.com
  - [3] 'Fiberglass Shingle Durability', roofbrokers.com
  - [4] 'Problems with Today's Asphalt', chandlermetalroofing.com
  - [5] 'Compare Roofs', metalroofsunlimited.com
  - [6] 'Residential Roof Replacement', solarshieldroofing.com
  - [7] 'Asphalt Roof Coverings', looksmarthomeinspections.com
  - [8] 'Composition', larryoweseverythingtojim.com
  - [9] 'Homeowners Guide to Roofing', classicroofing.com
  - [10] 'Frequently Asked Questions', metalroofing.com
  - [11] 'Excellent Roofing', excellentroofinghomeimprovements.com
  - [12] 'Benefits of a Metal Roof', metalshingle.com
  - [13] 'Study of Life Expectancy', National Association of Home Builders
  - [14] 'All About Roofing', asphaltroofing.org
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